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The Role of the Student.

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Participation in some areas of university governance is recommended in these 4 statements as an acceptable student role. The first statement describes "legitimate student demands" as those concerned with the quality of the educational experience as they relate to the stated objectives, purposes, and resources of the institution. In the solution of relevant problems, students should be permitted to participate on a broad scale in university committees and councils to introduce a fresh point of view in reasoned dialogue. The premise of the second statement is that reciprocity is the vital ingredient in healthy human relationships. Student, faculty, and administrative leadership are crucial, mutually reinforcing elements in the shaping of any institution committed to learning. The third statement places emphasis on the student as an individual with human feelings, needs, and desires. The administration and faculty should allow the student to be an active participant in the college community, and should contribute to his individual development by seeing that the results of his participation are both productive and educational. The fourth statement presents 3 ways in which a student's role should develop, but for the present suggests that students serve on committees that have been under faculty control. Mutual trust and respect must be developed in order to attain the ideal view of the university as a community of scholars. (W.M)

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THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT

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D. W. HALLADAY

Addressing oneself to the role of the student as it relates to the larger theme of "Leadership and Responsibility on the Changing Campus: Who's in Charge Here?" summons a vision of Snoopy toasting his comrades, dashing his empty champagne glass against the hearth, and flying off in his Sopworth-Camel once again to meet the Red Baron.

These opening remarks are not intended to imply that this is not an important subject. To be sure, it is one which demands the best of our thinking and judgment if we are to ensure the stability and the continuity of the academic enterprise.

It might be well to begin with a conclusion I reached some time ago which, at once, reveals a strong bias in favor of a positive attitude toward legitimate student demands. This conclusion is that students should participate in the affairs of the institution on a broad scale, and at a responsible level.

I would like to define the phrase "legitimate student demands" as I have just used it.

Legitimate demands are those concerned with the quality of the educational experience as they reasonably pertain to the stated objectives, purposes, and resources of the institution. They are legitimate in the sense that it is only reasonable that the student should be concerned with the quality of his education, and that he, quite likely, has some good ideas regarding its improvement.

This definition of "student demands" is based on a premise concerning the role of the student which may well be the most critical issue involved. The premise is that the overwhelming majority of students attend their colleges and universities to expand their intellectual stature, and to acquire professional skills and perceptions; and that the concerns of these young men and women for the quality of their educational experience are, indeed, legitimate, and should be represented in the councils and committees of the institution.

Such a premise suggests that the remaining students—activists, radicals, the unconcerned, or what have you—should not be heard.

This is not true, because some of what they have to say has merit. By the same token, some of the demands of certain of these groups fit neither the intellectual climate nor the corporate requirements of the university and will not enhance the continuity or the stability of the total enterprise.

These latter demands, therefore, must be placed in proper perspective for the total academic community, and laid to rest as inappropriate to the purpose of higher education and to the welfare and objectives of the overwhelming majority of students. To be more specific, I must confess that I have little patience with those kinds of activities which, too often, impose severe limits on the rights and freedoms of others. I do not agree that the heedless reshaping of a basic value system would serve a constructive purpose in our democratic society, which, despite its flaws and shortcomings, holds more hope for individual freedom, liberty, and justice than does any other system of government in the world today.

And I am firmly and unequivocally of the opinion that the destruction or the reckless revision of American higher education would serve little purpose in a society in which the major contribution to social, cultural, economic and political progress has emanated from that very same system of education.

A university must be a community dedicated to one objective: That of providing a meaningful education to those young men and women who enter its doors.

To make the educational experience meaningful, there must be a devotion to inquiry, and to the search for truth, buttressed by a commitment to the ideal of academic freedom and responsibility for faculty and for students. The university community then becomes an intellectual community in which inquiry, dissent, and the refinement of human values take place on an intellectual plane, and in a civilized manner.

If a major source of honest student disaffection results from the quality of the educational experience—and I believe this to be the case—then much of the success of the future will depend upon the faculty, on the quality and relevance of the classroom, and on the formal and informal counseling relationship between faculty and students.

Despite the tragedy and serious damage which have resulted from student protests in recent times, some good can be assessed from the conflict. Higher education has been forced to turn its attention to some of the problems which many of its practioners have long recognized but have not corrected. The faculty's disaffection from the basic function of good teaching in favor of research, publication, and cooperative endeavor with government and industry, has long been a concern of administrators. Of concern, also, has been the widening gap in terms of teaching and counseling relationships between the teacher and the student.

The relevance of subject matter, the conduct of registration, the rigid and limited requirements of some major courses of study, the replacement at the undergraduate level of the professor by the graduate assistant are but a few of the problems we have not solved.

In view of our needs for appropriate and rational change, is there any wonder that students are making "legitimate demands" in terms of their educational experience?

I urge the involvement of students in the proper solution of these problems as a means of introducing a fresh point of view in the necessary and reasoned dialogue for change. It also advances institutional purpose to admit to councils a group which has a most proper interest in and concern for the institution. The level of participation should be broad.

As a good beginning, it is suggested that students be represented on committees and in discussions where policy is formulated and where decisions are made. Such assignments might be most appropriate where those policies and decisions are specifically concerned with the student, but there should be equal value derived both for the student and for the institution by their broader involvement.

Why not place students on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and, certainly, the Discipline and Traffic Committee? There is no effort here to dislodge the pre-eminent,

well-recognized and necessary role of administration in administrative matters, or the faculty in academic matters. Experience would indicate that most students accept the idea that primary authority for institutional matters is vested in those who are best qualified to exercise it. They are asking to be heard, however, in matters of legitimate concern. And it is the purpose of this paper to argue their appropriate and broad involvement in solutions which could well improve the climate and the future of the academic community.

JOSEPH F. KAUFFMAN

Many of the concepts of student government and the role of the student that I found relevant and useful, and I believed true at a university with 33,000 students, I do not find appropriate to the urban, commuter college where I now find myself. And so I am taking the liberty of attempting to establish a frame of reference on the subject of the student's role.

The theme of this Annual Meeting includes the question "Who's in Charge Here?" I am not sure that it is a good question, or that there is any sound answer to it. Perhaps, that is one of our difficulties these days; we seem to have lost a sense of common destiny and we feel the need for reasserting, "Who's boss? Who's in charge? Who can be blamed for all our ills? And who can do what to whom?"

These are, I would submit, questions that have essentially to do with power. Power is a terribly important dimension of the reality of political life. But I find it inappropriate as a concept for governing a college or university.

To be sure, I know that boards of control must have the legal power to act on behalf of the institution. Ideally, however, and, I would say, historically, such power has been used and is to be used to protect the institution from external enemies who oppose the free play of ideas and the unfettered search for truth.

Inside a college or university, the emphasis ought to be on ideas – learning, teaching, service, wisdom, truth and beauty. It should be not on controlling, but on releasing the forces which will contribute to these ends.

Therefore, I would say that trustees, administrators, faculty, and students all have a common interest in the health of their institution but have differential responsibilities as participants in its tasks. Abuses of power should be resented and resisted by any and all of the component parts.

The role of the student cannot be prescribed without knowing a specific institution, a specific student body, and specific cases. Each institution develops differently and has unique historical antecedents. Community government may be fine for the particular circumstances of one

institution, and of no relevance whatsoever to another. Colleges at various stages of development may require emphasis in leadership very different from those required at other stages of development.

Certainly, commuter colleges differ from residential colleges, and freshman students are not the same as seniors or graduate students. Forms of student participation utilized to revise social regulations may not work at all where issues of curriculum or faculty evaluation are concerned.

In short, there is no easy answer to defining the role of the student in governance, per se.

But we can state some factors and some principles that can be applied to individual situations.

One of these would be the necessity to understand that two conflicting traditions of higher education have been merged in the United States, and they now conflict with a uniquely American thrust. The university tradition of the continental, and particularly German university—with its emphasis on highly specialized study, research and non-involvement of faculty with students—has been married to the collegiate tradition of the English model, where residental and tutorial relationships were all-encompassing.

So we how have a highly ambivalent and contradictory patchwork of responsibility for shaping character, providing student personnel services, showing concern with personality development and the like along with a faculty tradition of detachment from such matters as not being the proper business of scholars.

This conflict is at the breaking point in some institutions, and student radicals have been very effective in opening and exacerbating the wounds.

Thus, the cries of "student control over their own lives" fall on the sympathetic ears of those professors who have put aside their work to sit on committees which meet interminably on subjects of social regulations, parietal rules in dormitories, and similar non-scholarly matters. Yet at the very same time student critics are attacking, often with great justification, inadequate or sterile housing—urban renewal style—humdrum food, inadequate medical and psychiatric services, and are demanding improvements from their college or university.

It seems to me they are hung up on a "leave us alone, but do good things for us" contradiction.

To the European-English, aristocratic, elitist notion of higher education, has been added a uniquely American egalitarian notion: if education is good it ought to be for everybody. This means that, in some schools at least, students will be viewed by some faculty and staff as herds of savages who require effective controlling devices, since they cannot possibly appreciate what higher education is all about. To deal with large numbers, we have processed students, have reduced their uniqueness as individuals to procedures and evaluations that can be made common. In the course of democratizing higher education and its opportunity, we have been forced to dehumanize it all too often.

My basic suggestion, therefore, is that the improvement of human relationships within a college or university is the first order of business: That self-respect and mutual respect between the parties are vital if effective learning is to take place.

My premise is that reciprocity is the vital ingredient in healthy human relationships. The learner has something to contribute to the enterprise, even if nothing more than his willing cooperation. If he is made to feel only a beneficiary, an impotent subject to be ruled, he cannot respect himself or his situation.

William James once wrote: "All the qualities of a man acquire dignity when he knows that the service of the collectivity that owns him needs him. If proud of the collectivity, his own pride rises in proportion."

My overall philosophical or ideological view is that we must take a developmental approach towards students and student participation in governance. Students are in transition towards adulthood. Freshmen have emergent human needs that are different from seniors, who are different from graduate students—and these needs include the need to participate, to partake of responsibility, and to contribute to others. We must find ways to dignify, rather than trivialize, the human concerns of students. We must recognize the need for their sharing in the responsibility of institution-building.

Most of us don't know how to do this with our faculties, let alone our students. But that is the essential task, it seems to me.

I have not dealt with student power, SDS, or any of the outrageous destructiveness that has occurred on some campuses. For those who wish to destroy or capture the colleges and universities, there is no other response I know of than a staunch defense of what it is we are all about, or ought to be about. The involvement of students in a community of endeavor to which their idealism and generosity can be given, and welcomed is the only ultimate answer to the haters and the destroyers.

In the past five years, we have seen a steady loss of faith in institutions and processes of our society.

"Onward and upward through education," for example, no longer has a pledge of allegiance from some of our very best and most talented youth. Advocates of responsibility have become targets for ridicule. Relationships very often have deteriorated to a completely adversary nature.

Yet, as keen an observer of youth as Erik Erickson has stated that: "In the next decade, youth will force us to help them develop ethical, affirmative rules of conduct that remain flexibly adjustable to the promises and the dangers of worldwide economy and communication."

The legal question of "Who's in Charge?" is not in question. The de facto moral question, however, is not so simple. The constituency that is served by college administrators provides the moral and educational legitimacy for power. Student leadership, faculty leadership, and administrative leadership are crucial, mutually reinforcing ingredients in the shaping of any institution committed to learning.

WILLIAM PRICE

To discuss the role of the student one must first consider the role of the college.

That role, I think, is to train and develop the human intellect, to extend the power of independent and balanced thought, and to deepen the powers of discrimination and critical expression. It is to help the individual understand himself and, thus, his relationship to the world around him.

It is my feeling that the task of the college or university administration is to provide and safeguard the arena for this search. It is the task of the faculty to engage the student in this pursuit. Assuming these facts to be true, it would logically follow that the role of the student is to find purpose in life—an aim accomplished through questioning, challenging, demanding, and making mistakes. It is necessarily a process of looking within himself—a journey which can produce varied results, depending on the guides he has on hand to follow.

It is the role of the student, in today's society, to demand the right to be an active participant in the college community of which he has become a part. It is his responsibility to serve as a catalytic agent within his environment; and it is the task of the faculty and administration to see that the results are both productive and educational. The student has had to assume the responsibility for decentralizing colleges and universities. It has become the student's duty to remind the administrator that endless paperwork and administrative detail cannot be allowed to block off student's needs and desires.

The student has been forced to remind faculty that their primary responsibility is the education of the student, the guiding of the student—and not research. While it is true that research benefits the academic community, it does so indirectly for the student. It is very difficult to appreciate a faculty member who stands in front of an audience and speaks for fifty minutes every two or three days and then wanders off. If you have a question or wish to talk with him, he is not to be found.

I listened to Dr. Corson as he spoke about the role of the university. It's true that a college is supposed to do many things—to train tomorrow's leaders, to engage in research, to answer all the other demands that are placed upon institutions—but in the process no institution can be allowed to lose sight of the student as an individual.

Dr. Kauffman mentioned the Hazen Foundation report—I would like to read a paragraph from it. "We further urge colleges and universities to recognize that all their administrative personnel play a role in education, since they are the ones that students most frequently deal with. One wonders how much of the student unrest could be attributed to authoritarian police, rude clerks, hostile and unfriendly secretaries and testy tellers. If the institution as a whole is devoted to promoting the full human development of its students then all of its personnel should be trained to understand the needs of this development. No matter how unimportant a staff position may seem to the administration and faculty, it must be recognized that the students have to deal with many of these people constantly."

I would submit that the content of the paragraph I just read offers a large clue to much of the current student unrest—at least on my own campus.

I doubt it is necessary to explain the damage that one unthinking academic adviser can cause—an academic adviser who occasionally forgets the amount of mental turmoil a student goes through while trying to decide what curriculum he should be in or whether he should change his major. When the student finally makes that decision, he walks into an adviser's office only to be told that he does not know his own mind. He had better stay in that curriculum says the adviser. "Come back and see me in a month." Again, one forgets the frustration that a single rude, and seemingly spiteful clerk in a registrar's office can create, or the destructive effect of a college official who has lost sight of the student as a human being possessed of dignity. (I will steal from the Hazen Foundation Report again) "who hopes, worries, loves and hates and is not merely a receptacle for cold facts and statistics to be regurgitated at exam time."

The examples are endless, and so is the damage caused.

I would like to react to the statement by a previous speaker who said that the president of a college must take the lead in providing a community of scholars and that we need a redefinition of responsibility. I think my college is more typical of the American campus today than Berkeley or San Francisco State. The problems we face (and I think, possibly, they are the problems that are faced on many of the campuses represented here today) are such things as due process, curriculum, posting of grades. That last may sound like a minor point, but when you take your final exams in May and don't get your grades until the middle of July, you tend to worry. You tend to wonder what is happening.

The student has a difficult role to play today. I think that unless the administration and faculty begin to allow students to take part in many guiding committees, we are in for a long, hard future. As one who is considering college administration as a career, I would like to see the process start now.

Maybe it is a terrifying thought for a president or an administrator to have students in his office. But for the student, it is a terrifying thought that there are deans of students who never attend student meetings, who don't really know what is happening within the student body, who have no idea of the problems faced by many students. When I say deans of students I also include many administrators and faculty members. And if that sounds like an attack, it is.

I don't deny the fact that many faculty members and administrators are genuinely concerned with these problems. They are the ones who are too often unheard on the campus; the others seem to dominate. It is like the minority across the country who seem to dominate. I think the majority are too often overlooked.

RICHARD SKUTT

I think the topic this conference—and specifically this panel—addresses itself to has been around for a long time. Will the question be resolved? Will there be positive action on the part of students and faculty and administration to try to cure the ills which exist in our college campuses, so that we can alleviate the frustration, and the possibilities of revolt, and try to develop the true academic community that we like to talk about?

I don't think that community exists today.

The student power struggle, or the student movement, has taken a gradual step toward militancy.

One of the basic reasons for this move to a more militant position, or a more radical position in which both campus liberals and campus conservatives, are caught up is the fact that the one simple request, the one simple demand we make hasn't been answered. Students want to be treated and respected as human beings, and as part of a community. When we speak, we want to be listened to. We want to have this true voice within the academic community. For too long, requests have been ignored, or concessions have been made on a stopgap basis surrounding a particular issue such as women's hours or class attendance. I say sadly, that most of these issues have been focused in the social regulations and social aspects of the university, rather than on the academic. The student movement, consequently, has become a demand for power—and a power struggle.

I have to agree with Dr. Kauffman when he says that a struggle for power on a university campus should not exist. If we want to develop a true educational institution it has to be a communal institution, with a sharing of knowledge, and a quest for truth divided among the various segments of the university and sought after on an equal basis. But I don't see this coming.

I think there are three ways in which the students' role in the university should develop.

One step would be acquiring self-governance.

A second step would be recognition by the faculty, and the administration of a student's right to participate in the governance of the institution of the factors that affect his life.

The third way would be the establishment of this co-operative institution, this community of scholars, and this searching for the truth and knowledge.

Last Spring, during the student and labor rebellion in France, among the graffiti written on walls was one I would like to quote now. It says, "Be realistic; demand the impossible."

I think, as we go along, the impossible demands of students are not really so impossible. They are quite realistic. I would like to speak about some of the changes I think should be made within the academic institution.

Regarding social regulations, this is an area of prime importance that has been in the forefront of the student movement for several years. It wasn't until the past three or four years that students, student leadership and student groups, showed an active concern and tried to revamp and redevelop the academic structure of the institution.

Control of student regulations is a fairly easy topic to discuss because, as I said, it has been around so long. Any position paper you read, whether it is by an administrator, a trustee, a faculty member, or a student organization, says pretty much the same thing: Students should have as much control as possible over this area and they should be able to determine these regulations which are nonacademic and which involve only students. In this category would be such things as dormitory hours. Probably the most important area would be the residential system on the university campus. There is no reason, in my mind, why the control and regulation of student governments, and the student court systems cannot be entirely in the realm of student control.

It is a little harder to talk about the area of academics because this is a new area—one in which the students are only now taking an active role. Although the specific issues that may arise in this area at different universities may not be the same, the basic problem is the same: Students need to be trusted and respected as mutual and equal members of the academic community. I think it would be a good thing for students and for faculty to work together in this area. In some cases, the impetus may have to come from the administration.

There should be reorganization along the department level—I am talking about the academic disciplines—so that within each department and within each college, there are student government organizations and student advisory councils working closely with the faculty. One of the main reasons for this is that if you are a major in a particular discipline or a particular area, you are usually familiar with at least a half-dozen persons in that area. You know them on a first-name basis and your break into this area is much easier.

Another reason for this kind of reorganization is that much of the decision-making takes place on the departmental level. This is a place where the student's voice can have its greatest effect upon the academic policies of the institution.

I feel this is important, but I don't want to put aside the idea of including students in administrative committees, and in the administrative functions of the university, as well. I think also that including students on the trustee and governing body committees is probably more important than a seat on the board.

I would like to say, furthermore, that the board of trustees or the governing body of a university should be a democratically elected body—not necessarily a partisan body or one elected on a partisan basis or on a statewide level. It should not be appointed by a state legislature or anything of this nature. It should be elected by the university community. Then you would get persons who are interested in the total educational process, and not just in the building and financial and public relations aspects of the university. I see no reason why members of the university community themselves couldn't sit on this body. I think if you saw this kind of group in practice, there would be very little difference. Yet it would still be a democratically elected body, and would allow for a voice from all elements of the university community in university governance. I think this is a future goal, however, and something that must be talked about and discussed for a long time.

For the immediate future, I think that administrations, trustees and faculty should accept their students, should allow them to serve on

the committees that have in the past been controlled solely by faculties. These would be tenure committees—things of that nature. The activities of these committees affect the students but not as much, perhaps, as they affect faculty members. But the performance of a faculty member can be judged—and needs to be judged—at least in part, by the students.

I think we all have an idealistic view of the university as being a community of scholars. In order to attain our ideal, we must develop a mutual respect and mutual trust. Sadly enough, this does not exist on most of the college campuses with which I am familiar.

Someone said earlier that the student coming into the university today has an automatic mistrust of the administrator and of the faculty member. This mistrust isn't changed too much by the reaction he gets when he stands up and says: "We need a change."

Major points emerging from the discussion period:

Some institutions wishing to place students on committees had difficulty in finding students willing to participate. "The major problem," one administrator said, "is that the majority of the students aren't 'turned on' or are not interested enough to participate."

A related problem, and perhaps an underlying reason for lack of student response when an administration asks for student participation, is student reluctance to speak out about individual professors when participating in committees which select and give tenure to faculty members.

Perhaps faculty members themselves don't really understand what a student is doing on a committee. "We must teach the faculty the function of the committee and tell the faculty to allow the student to speak out. And we must also teach the student how to be a committee member, because most students don't know how to participate in committees."

A student speaker underscored this. The fact that an insufficient number of students volunteer for committee service indicates that the average student doesn't understand his role in the college community and is afraid to participate in any area other than a classroom. "He has to be taught that he has the right to a voice in the college community."

A president objected to student participation in selecting faculty. "Standards of excellence and scholarship go down the drain when issues of faculty appointment, retention and promotion become matters of popularity among students," he said. But the students pointed out that student evaluation was just one aspect of the total picture of judging faculty members and that the judgment of department members and chairman would also be involved.

One question that troubled the administrators was how students could truly enter into long-range plans for an institution when they are on campus only for four years.

The student answer was that if a student has been active on his campus and participated in the committees of his college, he carries with him always a loyalty to the institution. "It's a funny procees, but all of a sudden you begin to defend the college that you were screaming

about the year before, because now you are a part of that college." This kind of student can foresee many of the problems that will face his college in the years ahead. "Administrators tend to overlook some of the small things that can play such an important part in a student's existence for four years on the campus. But a student sees them, and for this reason you can justify student participation in committees that are making long-range plans. "It's too late to scream about the sterile rooms after they are there."

One president wanted to know how to go about getting effective student participation. Many institutions have students serving on committees, he said, but few are getting effective participation from them. There are ways of giving both administrators and faculty credit for participating in the decision-making process—but there is no way of giving credit to students for this participation. Should institutions give academic credit, make institutional resources available to students to facilitate their participation? If so, what kinds and under what conditions?

The students answered that "effective participation of the student" is an intangible concept. Perhaps human relationships were the basis, they said—the faculty member with whom the student had a drink in the local bar, or who invited the student to his home, or who worked with the student on a theatre project. One important component was the responsibility placed on the student's shoulders; another was the idea he was actually sharing and contributing. Student leadership should be non-salaried but there should be funds available to pay full-time staff to carry out the program mandates and to cover the extra expenses that come with office.

Many students who could be good leaders are lost. They cannot participate because they must work part-time to meet their college expenses. Perhaps an institution could underwrite tuition and fees, which would allow a student to take advance credits in summer school, freeing him for participation with the administration during the academic year.